

# THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.

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## MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY:—HENRY PURCELL.

[FROM HOGARTH'S MUSICAL HISTORY.]

HENRY PURCELL was born in the year 1658. His father, Henry Purcell, was a musician of some note, and one of the gentlemen of the Chapel Royal, as established by Charles the Second at the Restoration. Purcell lost his father, when he was<sup>d</sup> only six years old. It is not ascertained who was his first instructor in music; but, most probably, it was Cook, who was master of the children of the chapel at the time of his father's death. He afterwards received lessons from the celebrated Dr. Blow; a circumstance that was considered of so much importance in the life of that composer, that, in the inscription on his tomb, it is mentioned that he was "Master to the famous Mr. Henry Purcell."

Purcell resembled Mozart, in the precocity of his genius, as well as the shortness of his life. While yet a singing-boy in the King's Chapel, and before he could have been taught any thing more than the elements of singing, the force of his genius enabled him to produce several anthems, so beautiful, that they have been preserved, and are still sung in our cathedrals.

In 1676, when only in his eighteenth year, Purcell was appointed organist of Westminster Abbey, then, as now, a situation of dignity

and importance. At the age of nineteen, he composed the music of a drama, called *Dido and Æneas*; which was considered so excellent, that any composer then in England would have thought it an honor to be the author of it. Some parts of it, indeed, would do honor to any composer who has come after him. At twenty-four, he was advanced to one of the three places of organist to the Chapel Royal.

In the year 1683, Purcell published twelve Sonatas for the violin, in which he professed to imitate the style of the Italian masters, who had produced compositions of this kind. At that time the works of Corelli were not known in England; and Purcell's model was, probably, Bassani, who was Corelli's master. These compositions are worthy of preservation and occasional performance, as they will please from their ingenuity of contrivance, and from the excellent modulations, and good traits of melody, in which they abound, notwithstanding the want of knowledge of the powers of the instrument which they indicate. At the time, however, when Purcell composed these Sonatas, the powers of the violin were unknown to every body in England, as much as to him; and they had merit enough to make them be well received by the public. He was, therefore, induced to publish another set, one of which was considered so excellent, that it obtained the name of *The Golden Sonata*; and it is easy to see, that in those days, its effect must have been highly novel and delightful.

Purcell's ecclesiastical education led him to the composition of anthems, and other pieces for the church; which were so admirable, and became so numerous, that his fame soon spread over all parts of the kingdom. One of the most celebrated of his anthems was composed as a thanksgiving by Charles II. for an escape from shipwreck. To this circumstance we owe the sublime "They that go down to the sea in ships." In 1687, when James II. issued a proclamation for a thanksgiving on account of the supposed pregnancy of the queen, Purcell was chosen, as the greatest musician in England, to compose an anthem on the occasion; and he accordingly produced that which begins "Blessed are they which fear the Lord," and which is justly accounted a great and masterly work. The noblest, however, of all Purcell's sacred compositions is his *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*; a magnificent piece of choral music, with accompaniments, for the first time in England, for an instrumental orchestra. Its title runs, "*Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, for voices and instruments, made for St. Cecilia's Day, 1694, by Henry Purcell."

Purcell's genius was not limited to the ecclesiastical style. Like Mozart in this, as in many other respects, he was equally great in his compositions for the church, the theatre, and the chamber. The only dissimilarity between them, in this respect, was, that Purcell was not, like Mozart, equally great as a composer of instrumental music. Mozart was born at a time when instrumental music had been carried to great perfection, and was not only a great performer on the pianoforte, but had studied the powers and aptitudes of almost every other instrument. But Purcell could neither become a great instrumental performer himself, nor acquire a knowledge of the powers of instruments; because, in his day, no such knowledge existed in England.

The occasion of his first dramatic essay has already been mentioned. The excellence and success of his *Dido and Æneas* drew the attention of the managers of the theatres towards him. The music, both in the *Tempest* and in *King Arthur*, was composed by him. Purcell's music is still introduced when the *Tempest* is performed; and *King Arthur* was, a few years ago, revived under the title of *Arthur and Emeline*, with great success. The play of *Dio-clesian, or the Prophetess*, altered from Beaumont and Fletcher, with music by Purcell, was performed in 1690, and published in 1691.

Among other dramatic pieces to which Purcell furnished the music, were the following :—*The Fairy Queen*, altered from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Timon of Athens*; *Bonduca*; *The Libertine*; and *Don Quixote*. He also composed the music of a masque, which was introduced in the tragedy of *Œdipus*, when it was revived in 1692; and a musical entertainment, performed on St. Cecilia's day, November 22, 1693, which was published, in score, by Playford. The remainder of his compositions consist of a great number of single songs and duets, pieces for the harpsichord, airs for ballads, and glees and catches.

He made the great Italian masters, particularly Carissimi and Stradella, his models; and his works afford indications of his having studied the compositions of Lulli. But his imitation did not consist in stringing together fragments of Italian melody, and trying to force these into a union with English words. He studied the genius of the Italian music: observed that its excellences consisted in its smoothness and expression, and in the exquisite adaptation of the melody to what may be called the accent and modulation of the Italian language; and he endeavored to give to his own music

corresponding qualities. It thus arises, that Purcell's music, while it does possess the excellences of the Italian music which he studied, is perfectly original, and much more truly and essentially English than that of any composer who has appeared before or since.

Little has been recorded, and there was probably little to record, concerning the circumstances of Purcell's life. From the number and variety of his compositions, he must have been much devoted to the exercise of his art; though he appears to have been gay and good-humored, and of social habits. He is accused, indeed, and it would seem with too much foundation, of having been led by this disposition to form intimacies with mean and dissolute persons, to the injury both of his health and circumstances. Purcell's intercourse with society, however, was by no means limited to persons of the above description. The lord-keeper, North, and other persons of rank, were among his friends. Pepys, in his *Diary*, speaks of being in his society. Dryden was warmly attached to him,—an attachment arising partly from kindred genius and their connexion in the capacities of poet and musician, and partly from Purcell having been the master of the poet's wife, the lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the earl of Berkshire.

He died on the 21st of November, 1695, at the age of thirty-seven. His death is commonly ascribed to a cold, occasioned by being kept too long at his own door, one evening; when, unfortunately he came home from a tavern, heated with wine, and was kept for some time at the door, in a cold night, and contracted the disease of which he died. It may be added, that his death was occasioned by a consumption or decline, probably produced, or at least aggravated, by intemperance and irregular hours. He was buried in Westminster Abbey.

The works of Purcell are still dear to every lover of English music; and we are convinced that time, in place of consigning them to oblivion, will render them more and more popular. A number of his finest anthems are contained in Dr. Boyce's great collection of cathedral music; and there is hardly any recent collection of sacred music, in which some of his productions are not to be found. The publications of his compositions for the church, in his own time, are exceedingly rare and difficult of access. But Mr. Novello, who has so highly distinguished himself by his noble editions of the masses of Haydn and Mozart, the Fitzwilliam

music, &c., has recently completed a magnificent edition of Purcell's sacred music. Soon after his death, a selection of his most popular songs, duets, &c., was published by his widow, with the aid of a large subscription, under the title of the *Orpheus Britannicus*. There is a modern publication, in two volumes, entitled *The Beauties of Purcell*, which contains a great number of his finest productions. His catches, rounds, &c., are to be found in every collection of that kind of music.

Purcell's sacred music is of the greatest merit; but England is so rich in noble compositions of this kind, by native artists, besides the transcendent works of Handel, that Purcell does not stand alone in sacred music as he does in his vocal music for the theatre and the chamber. Here he remains, and probably will long remain, absolutely unrivaled by English musicians. He almost created this species of music in England, and at once raised it to a pitch of excellence, which none of his successors have even approached.

Purcell's music, with all its beauties, has many faults; but the faults belong to the age and country in which he lived,—the beauties to his own genius. The effect of his music is also impaired by the poverty of his instrumental symphonies and accompaniments. He did not know any thing of the powers of the violin, or, indeed, of any other instrument which is necessary in an orchestra. All the deficiencies and faults, therefore, of Purcell's music, may be ascribed to unfavorable circumstances, which no degree of genius could possibly have overcome. And yet, so successfully did he contend with these circumstances, and so admirable are his works of every class, that his continues to be, to this hour, the greatest musical name of which his country can boast.

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## REVIEW.

*The London and Westminster Review.* April—July, 1839.  
Article III. *The Pianoforte.*

[Continued from page 252.]

3. We now come to the third school,—“that showy school, which fashionable executionists have, from time to time, attempted to establish by the legerdemain of their amazing mechanical powers.

It will never be wholly deserted, inasmuch as the myriad prefer the false to the true: would rather be seduced than convinced—inasmuch as about two persons in ten, who learn music in England, are endowed with any real capacity for the art, and one in fifty is awakened to any perception of its real objects and bearings.” “Superseding the Sonata, the Rondo now had its turn;—just then, too, Rossini was in the zenith of his splendor, and his melodies, however fascinating on the stage, when sung by a Sontag or a David, could not but exercise an effect, destructive as it was fascinating, upon instrumental composition. Every thing was noise and sparkle and trickery. Though Kalkbrenner began with a better genius, it was presently laid aside for the popular idol, and he preferred to call down thunders of applause by wonderful flights of octaves, his exquisitely and glassy shakes, his brilliant divisions, round and clear *comme une chaîne de perles*, or his slower melodies meretriciously overladen with ornament,—to receiving such less noisy but more permanent honors, as would have rewarded the exercise of thought and meditation. In England, at least, Kalkbrenner’s music, with the exception of his Studies, is as wholly forgotten, as if he had not in his day been the Thalberg of the concert bill, while in the French capital his name is but sparingly mentioned by the passionate and enthusiastic *jeunesse*. His execution has been outdone in piquancy by Herz, in elasticity by Döhler, in velocity by Liszt, in delicacy by Chopin, in grandeur by Thalberg;—a fact to be clearly stated as a warning, for the benefit of those who permit themselves to be seduced from what is true and lofty by what is tinsel and superficial. A few other executive artists, far smaller than Kalkbrenner in their intellectual calibre, may be dismissed in his company. Czerny, whose marvelous facility of covering music paper by the yard, is a weekly astonishment to those who make the tour of such music-shops as supply “schools.” Pixis, who hid his light under a bushel, much about the time when Sontag quitted the stage, and who now travels Europe with his adopted daughter, Mademoiselle Francilla; and Herz, only three years ago an indispensable at every London concert, but who last season was unwilling, unassisted, to risk a benefit entertainment on his own account—*sic transit gloria!* Before, however, the last named mechanist be passed over for worthier names, justice demands that he should receive such praise as belongs to an ingenious manufacturer of changes on airs—to a melodist, whose original themes have a *nerve* and piquancy partak-



ing of the best features of ballet music. Nor let this be thought mockery in the place of commendation. Those who can write up to Taglioni and Fanny Elssler,—as Herz among the pianists and Mayseder among the violinists, are exactly calculated to do,—must possess such merit as belongs to elegance and vivacity. Some of the brilliant duetts for piano and violin, in which Herz has written the part for his own instrument, and De Beriot or Lafont that for the violin, may be mentioned as among the most vivacious and effective things of their kind. It is needless once again to point out how the wide circulation of all this music *ad captandum*, cannot but exercise a depreciating influence upon taste, and perpetuate the reign of what is tawdry and false and fashionable among those, whom other nurture might have rendered capable of relishing thoughts as well as sounds, and expression yet more than finger-gymnastics."

But we are giving too much space to this "heartless school," and will pass to one of a very different character.

4. This is the school—"not of strict science; not of judiciously varied finger-music; not of melody, equable, genial and fascinating,—but of Genius, which shall avail itself of the results of the contrapuntist's labor, which shall employ the hand of the performer, and give melody a thousand various characters subserviently to the working out of its own distinct and original conceptions. Of this school no one can be rightly called a founder, inasmuch as its nature implies a distinctive originality and invention in all its disciples, which owe as much to the student's self as to his master. Clementi, however, must be included in it, and, following chronological order, may be placed first. Few have done more for their art than he did—few have lived to see a progress so rapid and so extended. He may be said to have witnessed the infancy and growth of pianoforte-playing—not its decline, however, as some lovers of the old school have been pleased to imagine. \* \* \* \* With a brain of his own, fertile enough, and a hand sufficiently patient to ensure him success as an inventor, whether as a melodist, or an executive artist; his position as a young man was eminently calculated to make him an artist in the best sense of the term. \* \* \* Throughout the long range of Clementi's Sonatas, a remarkable variety is observable. In his *allegros* there is manifest a fire and a nerve, and an employment of the conceits of science and the vagaries of fancy, with equal freedom and judgment—in his slower movements a richness of harmony, an expressiveness of melody, and

a mastery over all the *embroidery* of music, which is so delightful if not laid on with too gaudy a fancy. Clementi's works—a faithful reflection of his playing—have been too much cast into the shade in these latter days."

"Greater honors might justly have been paid to Clementi, in the shape of minuter remark and closer analysis, did not the next and noblest writer for the pianoforte, whom we must mention, demand a Benjamin's share of attention. And if whosoever would approach the music of Beethoven, must be constrained by its unparalleled variety and suggestiveness—to employ epithets and illustrations almost without the limits even of liberal-art-criticism—the reviewer, in the present case, has a labor of more than ordinary love and extent, by reason of the new light recently thrown on his life and works, in the biographical notices standing at the head of this article. So much has been whispered, but so little known, about Beethoven, in England, that as much personal detail as can be possibly here compressed, besides being welcome, will also be found not irrelevant to the understanding of his genius and his works."

The work here referred to is entitled *Biographische Notizen über Ludwig von Beethoven*. Von Dr. F. G. Wegeler und Ferdinand Ries. Coblenz, 1838. *Biographical Notices of Lewis von Beethoven*. By Dr. F. G. Wegeler and Ferdinand Ries. The reviewer goes on.

"To authenticate these 'Notizen,' which do not pretend to any connection or completeness, it is enough to say that Dr. Wegeler, one of their authors, and himself, the intimate friend of Beethoven, is the husband of that Elenora von Breuning, in whose mother's house the wild and eccentric genius found a second home during the years of his boyhood, &c. Dr. Wegeler's share of the work includes many original letters of a deep and melancholy interest; for the Hermit of Vienna, though, as life advanced, his nature was *gnarled*, as it were, into an uncouth and threatening shape, by suffering and contracted circumstances and domestic trial,—never ceased to love his old friends, at Bonn, or wholly to drop correspondence with them, though he might write but once in ten years. The second half of the 'Notizen,' yet more valuable to the musician for the anecdotes it contains, was contributed by Ries, Beethoven's own pupil."

"He was strongly attached to his mother, and cherished her memory long after her decease:—when Ries presented himself as



pupil before him, with a letter from Father Ries, Beethoven, who was then busy, and never very ceremonious, received him with "I cannot now answer your father, but tell him I have not forgotten when my mother died"—a period of trial at which Father Ries had assisted him with money. \* \* \* \* It is beautiful to find him in his earlier days writing and speaking of his art as a service bringing its own reward, and only valuable as an engine of money-getting, inasmuch as it might enable him to assist the poor or to help an old friend. The strange craving for money which possessed him in his latter days, was but a malady superinduced by physical disease, and the unworthy treatment of coarse, rapacious relations. Never was any one less worldly than Beethoven as a boy—never any less disposed to stoop as a young man. Never was any one less of a courtier,—more stiff-neckedly resolute not to avail himself of the luxuries to which the patronage of his great friends might have introduced him."

"Characteristics so strongly marked, humors so far removed from common-place sympathies as those here presenting themselves, could not fail to tincture the musical career, as well as the personal life, of their possessor. Neither Wegeler nor Ries throw much light upon his mode of study; the former indeed tells us that Beethoven was indebted for instruction to Pfeiffer and Van der Eder of Bonn, and not (as other biographers have said) to Neefe, with whom he was merely appointed co-organist; that Haydn gave him few or no lessons; and that Salieri and Albrechtsberger found him a stubborn and not very industrious pupil, indisposed without question to subject himself to the straight-lacing of theoretical instruction; and showing, when but a youth, glimpses of that positive and self-relying spirit which made him, many, many years afterwards, defend two consecutive fifths which Ries had detected in one of his compositions, with a despotic "*Well, then, I permit it.*" Lest others, fancying themselves geniuses no less eminent, should be led astray, we will not say that Beethoven's music was like Dogberry's reading and writing, "the gift of nature;" but it is certain that at an early age he manifested attainments of a height and a daring which pointed him out as already "first among the first."

We find this part of the Review which relates to Beethoven so interesting, that we shall present our readers with copious extracts; and must therefore bespeak their indulgence for breaking off in the story of this celebrated man, before it is scarcely well begun.

(*To be continued.*)

## MUSICAL CONSERVATORY.

[Continued from page 256.]

The model performances would not be for the *formation* of musical taste, but for the further *cultivation* of the most refined taste among us. They should consist largely of instrumental music, as this has hitherto been most neglected by us. In all concerted instrumental performances here, there is a lack of that effort at unity of effect, that relinquishment of self, that submission of the individual, for the purpose of one combined effect, which alone can ensure such performance as shall render such pieces intelligible, and enable an audience properly to appreciate them. We have not now the means, even taking our best performers, of getting up a model orchestra, at least without considerable training. We do not mean to say that we have not good performers on individual instruments; we have several such: but they are not sufficiently accustomed to orchestra playing, and would not be able to divest themselves sufficiently of that love of distinction, to secure the production of unity of effect in a musical composition. Neither have they all the shades of expression enough at command. Besides, we cannot command stringed instruments enough to counterbalance the overpowering effect of the wind instruments.

There are, however, a great many kinds of concerted instrumental pieces, which might very well be produced here; such as the Trio, Quartett, and Quintett, for stringed instruments; which are every where so well appreciated and so common in Europe. Then there is the pianoforte, joined with the stringed instruments, in Duets, Trios, Quartetts, and Quintetts: the Flute combined with stringed instruments in Quartetts and Quintetts: and Solos on all these instruments, with Pianoforte or Quartett accompaniments. These furnish a sufficient variety to give attraction to these concerts; and little or none of all these kinds of music has ever been attempted here. In addition to the Academy's Professors, our plan will only require them to engage four additional performers, making a full Quintett for stringed instruments; and it is to be hoped that these concerts might thus be of such character as to justify the Academy in putting their tickets at a handsome price.

The choice of a Conductor is of the greatest importance. He must not only be acquainted with both the theory and practice of

music, but must understand the nature and character of the various instruments in the orchestra, and of the different kinds of voices. He must be competent to read the full orchestral score, and to direct from it; and be able to enter into and appreciate the meaning and intention of the composer. It will be necessary that he should direct the instrumental performances, so as to assist each performer towards the proper manner of execution, by giving his whole attention to this object. This the Leader cannot do, being too much occupied with his own part. It may do very well for the Leader to direct alone, in purely orchestral performances, where each performer is properly and thoroughly trained to his task; but not with us, where so much is yet to be learned, where so much must depend on the director, and where the Leader must sustain the burden of the first violin. Under these circumstances the Leader must be second in command; and must constantly catch the hints and ideas of the Conductor, and transfer them, by his influence and example, to the other performers. The qualifications which we have stated for the Conductor are absolutely necessary, or the whole will be a failure; and we presume all will agree that it will not be difficult to select the man for the office.

The concerts must not be got up in haste, but with thorough preparation. The want of this is what renders most of our performances so little satisfactory. The rehearsals usually consist in nothing more than playing the pieces over: without stopping to correct errors, or to repeat parts which either go wrong or not at all; and still less with any effort at a general and uniform understanding of the piece. This is the place for the conductor to show his talents, by the detection and correction of errors, by keeping all the instruments at an accurate and uniform pitch, by giving the performers the true understanding of the character and expression of the piece, and by aiding them one and all to bring out the proper effect.

The concerts should by all means be short; an hour and a half is quite sufficient. If the audience leave the house with the desire to hear more, so much the better. Quantity can never compensate for lack of quality; and where a performance is good, it requires the less to satisfy.

It is hardly necessary to say, that such an undertaking as this will very greatly extend the influence of the Academy. There is as yet no such institution in the country as this will make it; and

therefore there is no control exerted over the musical means and musical men, on which the public can rely in their judgments. The grossest impositions are practised, and there is no standard to go to. For our instrumental music, too, we have to depend in a great measure upon foreigners; and the Academy would thus supply this want, and become a criterion of authority all over the country. We need only mention the single branch of organ-playing, to illustrate our meaning. These instruments are multiplying fast throughout the country. They must be played by somebody. How frequently, how almost constantly, is it the case, that they fall into the hands of those that are wholly incompetent. Even here in the city, we have but two or three that can be called good organists. If there was an established institution to look to for persons to take charge of these instruments, we should soon see them in better hands. The same persons would also necessarily operate greatly for the improvement of church music in all respects; and we should see this part of public worship rising to its proper sphere and influence, and to that elevation in the public regard which it ever ought to hold.

We hope the Academy will soon begin to take this its proper ground, before the public, as an Academy of Music: if not, we have little doubt that another institution will ere long be got up, that will.

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#### USES AND DUTIES OF THE *CONDUCTOR* AND THE *LEADER*.

[TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN FOR THE MUSICAL MAGAZINE.]

On the performance of a piece of music depends, if not wholly, at least in a great degree, the perception and acknowledgment of its merit: and this is the only point in which the creative musician labors under great disadvantages, when compared with masters in the other arts. The intelligent reader of a good poem needs not the aid of the actor to enable him to enjoy its beauties; sculpture and painting stand open to the eye and heart of every beholder; but the work of the musician, however finely it may be conceived, however securely he may have put it down in writing, wants the performance to breathe life and spirit into it; and this he must often

leave to others, nay, to the combination of many. His signs upon paper have a meaning for connoisseurs only; any one else can but understand and appreciate the actual tones which are there inscribed. Thus the composer has to confide the whole effect of his work to the performer. The latter must therefore not only strive to give expression to the whole, but must also be aware of the different shades, perspectives, &c. of the different parts of the musical picture; and must combine them into a whole. He must, in one word, make this poem of another his own.

This is of course easier for the individual, than for a number of performers; and is the more difficult, the greater the number. It cannot be expected that every musician who participates in a great concerted performance, should possess the musical education and cultivation necessary to a true and full conception of its spirit. An Orchestra, therefore, has one or two individuals, who may represent, as it were, the composer and his work. These are the *Conductor* and the *Leader*.

The *Conductor's* duty is the most important. He must study the spirit of the whole composition: he must fully *understand* the composer, and enter into his conceptions. The rehearsals are his proper field of action, where he must labor with the greatest patience and perseverance, to make the whole body, as well as each single individual, give the true expression of the composition in all its parts. He must himself be a composer; for he is required to know accurately the effect of each kind of voice, as well as of each instrument, both individually and combined; and to conceive the particular tendency of the genius of the composer of each piece that is to be performed; he must also combine with this a true love of the art. His duty extends over the manner of performance of each Solo or Chorus or *ripieno* part; and he is answerable for each performer's right conception of the meaning of the composer in each part of his work: failure in which can only be attributed to his want of knowledge, or to his carelessness, in instructing during the rehearsals; and these must always be full and frequent. During the performance, the Conductor must first give the time by his beating, with the full score before him; thus keeping the instruments and singers together, and giving life to the whole. He must therefore stand in front of the Choir and Orchestra, in such position that he can be seen by *each member*. His chief attention must be directed to the vocal parts; and in instrumental compositions, to

those that have the melody; and it is therefore well, especially in Recitatives, to have a pianoforte at hand, on which he may assist the singer. But in the performance he must be as calm and quiet as possible, however much of activity and life he must show in the rehearsals.

The *Leader* must follow the hints of the Conductor in the rehearsals, with close attention; and take from them the true conception of the spirit of the whole, as well as of the single parts; and then, at the performance, he must communicate this spirit, by his playing, or by hints if necessary, or by winks of his eye, to the full Orchestra; especially where the members have not correctly understood, or have forgotten, the instructions of the Conductor. His proper place is at the head of the first Violins, this being the most important and energetic instrument, and the most capable of setting the example to the whole Orchestra. He must have his eye constantly on the Conductor, who looks primarily to him for any *particular effect* which he wants brought out.

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### THE VIOLIN.

The modern *violin* is a modification of an instrument called the *viola*, or viol, which was invented during the middle ages, and continued in general use till the seventeenth century. It was mounted with six strings, and had a finger-board, like that of the modern guitar, with *frets* for directing the position of the fingers; but it was played with a bow. The viol was of three sizes: the treble-viol, the tenor-viol, and the bass-viol. The violin was formed from the treble-viol, by diminishing its size, reducing the number of its strings from six to four, and depriving the finger-board of frets, so as to allow the performer to regulate, by his ear, the position of his fingers. By a process precisely similar the bass-viol, or *violone*, was converted into the *violoncello*.

The French and Italians dispute the invention of the violin. That it was, at least, in general use in France earlier than in Italy, appears from the circumstance, that, in Italian music of the latter part of the sixteenth century, the violins are called *piccoli violini alla Francese*. The first great violin-player on record, however, was Baltazarini, an Italian, who was brought into France by Catha-



rine de Medicis, in 1577. The celebrated Corelli, born in 1653, may be considered as the father of the violin; and his compositions for it are still highly esteemed. He was the founder of a school, which produced a succession of great performers, during the whole of the last century, by whom the powers of the violin have been gradually brought to their present height. [*Hogarth's Mus. Hist.*]

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### PIANOFORTE PLAYING.

Many entertain the erroneous opinion, that to arrive at excellence, it is necessary to practise at least six or seven hours every day; but I can assure them, that a *regular daily and attentive study* of at most three hours, is sufficient for this purpose. Any practice beyond this damps the spirit, produces a mechanical rather than an expressive and impassioned style of playing, and is generally disadvantageous to the performer, inasmuch as when compelled to lay aside this incessant exercise, if called on to play any piece on a sudden, he cannot regain his usual powers of execution, without having some day's previous notice. [*Hummel's Pianoforte School.*]

HUMMEL.—Like Choron, this great pianist has shown in his invaluable studio, that there is no achieving great effects, without attention to small ones. If he had not acquired the prodigious mass of information, which is to be found in this legacy to rising artists, he never would have risen to the eminence he enjoyed. But it was not the least distinguishing feature of his genius, that he was able and willing to communicate it so unreservedly and in so perspicuous a manner.

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### ORCHESTRAL MUSIC.

About the middle of the eighteenth century began those improvements in the composition of orchestral instrumental music, which laid the foundation for the present unrivaled school of Germany. Hitherto the music of this description had consisted chiefly of the concerto, in which there was a leading part for a single violin, accompanied by the band, in four parts of stringed instruments only. Francis Benda and J. Stamitz added several wind instruments to

the band, and thus formed the rudiments of the modern symphony. This species of composition was further improved by Vanhall, a Viennese musician, of whom Burney, in his German tour, gives an interesting account. He was then a young man of a flighty and eccentric character, and living so obscurely, that the doctor could hardly find out the garret which he inhabited. He afterwards, however, acquired the utmost popularity; and his symphonies, quartetts, and other instrumental pieces, were in great vogue all over Europe, till they were superseded by those of Haydn.

Our readers may be amused with the two following paragraphs translated from the Paris *Gazette Musicale*. They are whimsical specimens of French credulity, and are not solitary indications of the degree of confidence that is to be placed in the matter-of-fact statements of that paper.

"We cannot pass in silence an invention which is doubly interesting to *artistes*, being favorable to the voice, and a guaranty of security for dramatic representations. They have just constructed at Boston a theatre wholly of tin; curtains, scenes, orchestra, prompter's box, the entire hall, the stuffed seats, all of the same material. Although the hall is very large, the least sound is not lost. The paintings are very splendid. Here is a theatre at length entirely incombustible, and to all these advantages is added that of a saving of about one third of the expenses of construction. Also the public has applauded with the greatest enthusiasm the architect and inventor, Mr. Ananiali, to whom, as a testimony of admiration and gratitude, the body of merchants of that city have presented a snuff-box worth \$15,000."

The other is from an obituary notice of Maelzel, and is part of a description of his *Panharmonicon*: this is it:—

"What was most admired in this master-piece of mechanics, was the expressive play of the violinists, which were remarkable also for the extreme agility of their fingers, and the graceful manner with which they managed the bow."

A GRAND FESTIVAL was given at Warsaw last year, when some beautiful compositions, by Elsner, were performed. The Orchestra contained three hundred persons.